

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

By this amendment, claims 1 – 10, 12 – 31, and 33 – 44 are in the application.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended essentially to include the subject matter of now canceled claim 11 while addressing the objection to original claim 11. That objection appears in paragraph 2 of the Detailed Action. Also, claim 1 has been amended to specify that the claimed system provides for certifying the capabilities of a “further manufacturing facility” (one that is not part of the exchange) and for allowing the certified further manufacturing facility to join the exchange. This aspect of the system is described on page 7, paragraph 4 of the application. Applicant believes that neither Wong nor any other reference of record describes or suggests the combination of amended claim 1.

Method claim 22 has been amended in a manner, somewhat like claim 1, that clarifies that the system has the ability to invite a further manufacturing facility to assist with completion of the task in a manner that cannot be performed by the plurality of manufacturers that are part of the exchange. As noted on page 7 of the specification, one example of this feature occurs where a new supplier is invited to be a certified supplier in the exchange in instances where the new supplier can offer a solution/product that cannot be provided by others in the exchange. Amended claim 22 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by the art of record.

New Claims

New claim 43 has been added to point out an aspect of the invention (last paragraph, page 7) relating to restricted communications between customers and certain suppliers, while still permitting the advantageous internet-speed collaboration.

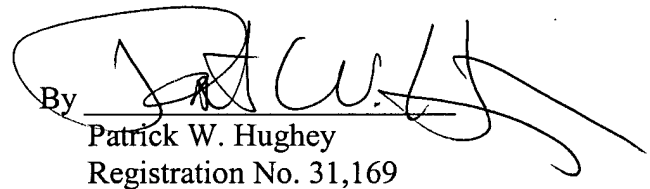
New claim 44 incorporates the request for quotations (RFQ) distribution scheme that uses three separate hubs (e.g., Asia, Europe, and NAFTA hubs) so that the RFQ can be entertained for a predetermined period (such as 8 hours) in the time zone of each respective hub.

Drawings

Applicant notes the drawing objection (paragraph 1 of the Detailed Action) and related comment that the informal drawings are acceptable for examination purposes. Applicant also notes that this application has been published with the drawings as filed. Accordingly, applicant understands that formal drawings may be filed upon an indication of allowable subject matter for the Office.

If the Examiner has any questions, he is invited to contact applicant's attorney at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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